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BOOK REVIEWS.

Raphael Semmes. By Colyer Meriwether. Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs and Company, Publishers. 1913.

This is one of the best of the "American Crisis Biographies." Mr. Meriwether had a thrilling subject, and he has told the story well. Only the name of one American seaman can be placed by the side of Raphael Semmes, and that is John Paul Jones; and both of them were identified, strange to say, with the South, whose energies were chiefly agricultural. Indeed, of all the Southern leaders in the war for Southern Independence, Semmes dealt the blows against the United States most lasting in their results.

Mr. Meriwether justly says that the world never saw and will never see again a cruise like the two years' cruise of the Alabama. During all this time Semmes exhibited the daring example of the Viking of old, tempered with the courtesy and humanity of the Southern gentleman. It seems strange at this date that his really admirable qualities were not appreciated by Lincoln and Welles, his Secretary of the Navy. Although Semmes, was a regularly commissioned officer of the Confederate States, Lincoln denounced him as "a pirate" and Welles, his Secretary of the Navy, unchecked by his superior, employed every means to have him captured and punished as a felon. This was perfectly in line with the harsh policy pursued by Lincoln throughout the war, and for which he cheaply atoned in one or more of his messages by a few kind and much exploited expressions.

Perhaps Mr. Meriwether should have mixed a little censure with his praise in commenting upon Semmes' battle with the *Kearsage*. This battle brought on by Semmes himself was the one great blunder of his life. His boat was not intended for offensive war, but was a commerce destroyer, and he should have risen above the temptation of risking her real value in a mere duel at sea. Moreover, the evidence produced by Mr. Meriwether shows that Semmes knew that he went into the battle under many disadvantages, and that he fought largely because he could no longer bear the foolish taunts of the enemy's newspapers that he was afraid to meet an enemy of anything like equal strength. This was a weakness, pure and simple, but, perhaps, it only shows that like all human beings, Semmes was not perfect.

A Confederate Girl's Diary. By Sarah Morgan Dawson. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin Company. 1913.

This is a very readable work, and intensely human in its narrative. Mrs. Dawson was the daughter of Judge Thomas Gibbs Morgan, who had